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MEDICINE
AND
PSYCHOLOGY

—
D. DE B. HOVELL, F.R.C.S.







MEDICINE AND PSYCHOLOGY:

THE ANNUAL ADDRESS TO
THE HUNTERIAN SOCIETY,
FOR 1866.

By DENNIS DE BERDT HOVELL,
FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS, ENGLAND.

What employment will the Orator find in a world
where there is no wrong to be attacked, and no right to
be defended?



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MEDICINE AND PSYCHOLOGY.

IT has been said, that if any individual, however humble his pretensions, will carefully note down, at the time of their occurrence, such circumstances as come under his notice, he will by the fidelity of his work, apart from any quality of intrinsic value, contribute that which is useful to his fellow creatures; and it is only by thus endeavouring to turn to account some of the various facts that have from time to time presented themselves for observation in the course of my professional life, that I can hope to fulfil the task assigned to me of endeavouring to illustrate the principles and practice by which John Hunter contributed so much to the elevation of the profession, to the advance as well as the improvement of the healing art, in order that this annual occasion may be the means of stimulating each successive age to follow his example. And although it necessarily does not fall to the lot of all members of our or of any other profession to stand in the first

rank, every member is not the less called upon to fulfil to the best of his ability the duties of his particular province; so, equally, although the talent to discover brilliant facts and truths is beyond the scope of most of us, it still remains to every one to test the value of such discoveries by bringing their light to bear upon the cases that come before him, and thus, in the words of an old writer, though a man cannot invent anything new after so many, he may do a welcome work yet, and help posterity to judge rightly of the old.

To pronounce the impossibility of cure of certain diseases, says Lord Bacon, is to sanction by a law the ignorance or the remissness of the physician. Yet, however far off and impracticable the cure of all diseases must ever be, notwithstanding this bold assertion, the question will bear some analogy to calculations of the duration of human life, which, approaching to an actual certainty in the aggregate, are open to the greatest insecurity in the instance of each individual person; so, although a certain number of diseases will always remain incurable, we know not which of the most intractable may next be compelled to conform to the improvements of our art. Something may yet be found to influence favourably

the state of the blood in cancer, as well as improve the imperfect organization that results in tubercle.

Let it not be said that it is useless to fix so high and unattainable a standard, still less let it be treated with ridicule. Would any one think of rejecting the use of the mariner's compass because, although it possesses the marvellous power of constantly pointing to the North Pole, we cannot possibly reach that inaccessible spot; and, even if we could, its usefulness would perhaps be least shewn in conducting us thither? We know that the perfect needle ever maintains the true direction, and that the same quality imperfectly developed needs the assistance of certain electric currents passing constantly at right angles, to keep it steadfast. So may our professional aim be ever kept well directed by the right-minded currents of diligent labour and patient investigation; and if we can neither cure cancer nor modify its growth, we can at least relieve the pain by narcotics, and neutralize the stench by anti-septics.

It is not by any assumed novelty that I seek to engage your attention, but, in accordance with the principle quoted above, by endeavouring to trace through the practice of therapeutics some one principle of action that proves to be most extensively

efficient, which we adopt unintentionally, and find unexpectedly to be the cause of our greatest success: neither by seeking to invest an old principle with a new form; but simply by bringing under a stronger light that which is of every-day practice, to endeavour to extend the ground of a useful principle, one that from its very simplicity appears to have been sometimes partially lost sight of. In other words, not only are better results obtained by adhering to first principles, but where these are put aside for others that are considered improvements, the substance of good results is in danger of being missed for the shadow of loftier pretensions. It is better to confine ourselves to means within our reach, and endeavour to extend and improve them, than unsuccessfully to attempt to rise above the limits of our condition; preferable to earn our advance by the sweat of the face, than to tempt a fall by soaring on the wings of Icarus.

It is not intended to imply that the less perfect practice of our profession is otherwise than partial, but it may not be inexpedient to inquire how far it becomes affected by the tendency of collateral science. Isolation of any one mode of life is, in these times, as impracticable as it is inexpedient;

and we are apt to be influenced more or less by surrounding circumstances—the existing tendency of our thoughts, words, and deeds is to partake of the several qualities of many, and to lack the completeness and perfect finish of any one. The age of which it was foresaid that “many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased,” cannot in some respects be very different from the present; but posterity will decide, better than ourselves, whether this period has been most influenced by the collective self-interest of the many or the presiding wisdom of the few. In an age so exacting in the calls upon the time of most of us, little opportunity is left for close study and individual research. The current ideas of the day are passed so rapidly from one to another, that sufficient time is hardly allowed for making a correct impression; in the hasty transition they are apt to lose their clearness of outline and characteristic definition, and thus eventually to represent something different from the original intention.

But if knowledge is to be increased, so also should it be amplified and extended, and still further usefully applied; and as the objects of travel, however bright and valuable they may be, are not of real

avail unless they operate by enlarging the mind, and thus enabling us practically to correct defects pre-existing, mainly because they were unseen and unobserved until revealed by contrast, so our professional excursions into the regions of Science ought invariably to bring back some improvement in the treatment of disease. The morbid craving for mere novelty should ever be tempered with this restriction, lest we become open to the remarks made by the Turkish Cadi to the English traveller,—After the fashion of thy people thou hast wandered from one place to another till thou art happy and content in none. And we ourselves shall not do amiss to recollect the question asked of the excursionists at each successive place that they visited, until they came to ask it of themselves,—For what are we here?

It is one of the anomalies of the age—the passage is taken from a recent publication—that credulity appears to keep pace with the advancing cultivation of the intellect: we are becoming so severely logical, and our reasoning powers are so keenly developed, that we are beginning to have grave doubts about the Mosaic records, which have been hitherto regarded in the light of fundamental truths. We are endea-

vouring to correct Revelation so that it may not for the future insult our understanding.

Infidelity and credulity were never at a higher pitch than now. Instead of striving to assert our superiority over the beasts of the field, we are struggling hard to claim relationship by natural development with the monkey tribe, and Science is unwearied in her efforts to make the claim good.

We set out upon an investigation ; step by step we ascend from minor cause to minor cause, till at last we come to Infinity, where we are lost,—to a something upon which the whole depends, that is the Great First Cause, the Super-natural.

We look into ourselves, and ask why we did such and such a thing ; how we were led from its first conception to its final accomplishment ; and we may go back step by step to the first gleam of light which streamed into our mind and lit us on the way, and there we pause: for whence that gleam of light came we cannot tell, nor what its precise influence was upon the delicate tissues of the human brain ; and our investigation again, after conducting us to the vestibule of the Super-natural, leaves us in darkness.

It may be confidently asserted that, if these

anomalies arise from the refinement of the intellect, they are not the result of the cultivation of the reflective powers; but, on the contrary, precisely because Reason, the first of our mental prerogatives, and the not less important faculty of observation, have been so often neglected for the secondary qualities of memory and rote. Education is a subject much misinterpreted in word and abused in deed: it is intended literally to mean the drawing out of the faculties; but, by being altered into merely pouring in and puffing up, it has too often resulted in choking and repressing some of the most valuable of them. Its highly necessary adjuvants—discipline and training—are not only too often, but too entirely neglected; and the want of this is much felt, because it operates negatively by preventing and neutralizing the good effects of teaching.

“So if a man’s wits be wandering,” says Bacon, “let him study the mathematics, for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again.” Nothing could illustrate more strongly the importance of soundness of matter before extent of subject. *Abeunt studia in mores.* The tenour of a man’s mind necessarily affects his conduct in the course of his calling, whatever it may be; and in our own, the

special professional is unable to supersede the elementary defects of primary general education, which is, in fact, answerable for the existence of many imperfections in the practice of the profession: they no more properly belong to it than the errors quoted above do to true science.

When Micromegas, an inhabitant of Sirius, in stature one hundred and twenty thousand feet high—whose intellect, vast in proportion, had been cultivated and strengthened by a course of study extending over two hundred and fifty years, at the College of the Jesuits in his planet—was banished thence by the Muphti on account of his suspicious opinions and the heretical tendency of his writings, he came to visit this earth, and actually walked round it without observing the Mediterranean Sea. He then began peering about, and discovered an almost imperceptible object which proved to be a whale; this he took up and placed upon the nail of his thumb for the purpose of a close examination. Regarding this as a specimen, he laughed at the ridiculous littleness of the inhabitants of our globe, and speculated for some time as to whether so small an atom had mind, will, liberty of action, &c. Next, by the aid of a magnifying-glass, he perceived

something rather larger than the whale, which proved to be a ship; and further, by the aid of a still stronger lens, he detected the presence of men on board, and, notwithstanding that they appeared to him in the light of insects, by means of certain highly ingenious contrivances, the result of his fertile invention, he entered into conversation with them. Great was the astonishment of the intellectual monster when one of the sailors, more bold than the rest, took out a quadrant, and told him his exact height.

We will now turn to a passage in the psychological essays of the late Sir Benjamin Brodie, which represent many of the views and opinions, and contain much of the judgment and experience formed in the course of his long life of industry and integrity, which were written when the cessation of his professional labours threw him back on the resources of memory and reflection, when the evening of life was beginning to discover to his failing sight the view of distant worlds, unseen in his bright meridian; but, it is probable, not by him forgotten, in the midst of his life's busiest day.

“*Eubulus.* You judged rightly in saying that these

feelings might not be of long duration. I can assure you, from my own experience, that such a mode of life as that which you seem to contemplate would never satisfy you, unless you were to combine with it some worthy pursuit, appertaining to others as well as to yourself. You would, if thus living only for yourself, soon find the social instinct, of which we were speaking yesterday, to be as irresistible as that of hunger, so that you might as well pretend by a process of reasoning to abstain from eating, if you were famished, as from seeking the society of your fellow creatures when you had been for some time deprived of it."

But the acquisition of scientific knowledge, and the recognition of social instinct, do not avail either of them unless they be converted to some useful purpose.

We will now proceed to the recollection of the fact mentioned by Professor Owen at one of the last anniversary meetings of this Society, showing the practical turn of John Hunter's mind, namely, his noticing at a certain time, when the horn of the stag was about to be developed, a marked increase in the size of certain branches of the temporal and ophthalmic arteries, which subsided again to their ordinary calibre when the growth was completed;

and the contemplation of this fact led him to the conclusion that there existed in small arteries a capacity to increase their size, ready to be called into action when circumstances demanded, and to return again to their ordinary condition when the occasion had passed by. And thus his mind was led, not by accident, but by reflective design, to the operation for tying the femoral artery in cases of aneurism ; and this circumstance well illustrates one characteristic feature of his mind, which led not only to his great reputation, but the actual veneration of his name.

The habit of the mind, as well as the fashion of the doublet, has ever been to some extent modified by the then existing custom, and in the same way medical opinion has been wont to be swayed more or less by the prevailing theory of the day. At one time arose the humoral pathology, to be entertained for a time and then to fall into disapprobation, and be succeeded by others which rose and fell in a similar manner: the first temporary duration and subsequent resuscitation of these and other theories of disease show their original imperfect conception and want of precisely ascertained foundation. But there are certain imaginative and intangible, because necessarily indefinite propositions, which emanated

from the deeply reflective mind of Hunter, and were intended by him to express some principle of action which he recognised and saw himself, but which he could not clearly demonstrate to others. I refer to the *vis medicatrix naturæ* and others; and without here discussing their merits and reality, it is worth while to inquire how far the denial of these principles, and the want of power to appreciate them, is identical with, what might be termed, the materialism of physiology and pathology, or how far they stand in the same position as the laws of gravitation before their demonstration by Sir Isaac Newton. In these as in some other matters, we are brought to a standing position of question and doubt; not only because our imperfect powers of Reason do not accurately determine what she can prove and what she cannot, but also because we do not clearly define where her power ends, and where it becomes merged in some higher faculty or moral attribute. These considerations lead us to inquire how far it is more analogous and consistent with what we know of the constitution of nature to recognise the hypothetical germ of a latent principle—the ovum, as it were, of special reproduction, already existing, ready to be called into action when the occasion requires, and equally

ready to subside after its purpose has been accomplished into its former normal state—than for imagination to suppose that the peculiar affinity of any one particular quality for its fellow is capable of giving rise to the origin of new species ; whether, on the one hand, it is better to believe in the distinguishing development of—

Every one

According to the gift which bounteous Nature
Hath in him closed,

or in the development of any particular affinity (and whence arises that affinity ?), or in any impossible result from “a fortuitous concourse of atoms”?

The demand for treatment will necessarily arise, in the first instance, before there has been time and opportunity to inquire into the nature and cause of any disease that presents itself ; and it will readily be admitted after full, though not perhaps perfect investigation, that proportionate improvement in treatment has not followed. Whether it be that the scientific inquiry into the cause is more attractive, or has received more attention, because a higher meed of praise, or it may be a higher professional position has been awarded ; or it has been assumed that a higher order of intellect is required, or that

pathology has appeared to discover a state of things too hopeless to be remedied, or so much disappointment has followed the attempt that discouragement has ensued ; certain it is that, instead of a natural coalition between diagnosis and treatment, there has been an old feud—even now not quite extinct—between the so-called theoretical and practical man ; each more inclined to descant on the errors and depreciate the merits of the other—the practical man, however, coming in for the larger share of disparagement—than mutually to coalesce for the advancement of the main object. But when not only pages, but volumes are written on the description of diseases, their structural changes, their minute pathological investigations, and treatment is dismissed in a few indefinite lines ; when having arrived at a perfect definition, there all efforts stop short, not only confessedly at a loss what to do, but complacently satisfied to leave the matter in the immature state of perfect description and unattempted remedy, —we are spontaneously reminded of what was humorously said of a then prevailing fashion, that formerly the buckle was a contrivance to keep on the shoe, but now the shoe was of no earthly use but to keep on the buckle ; and when the Physician, not having

even the excuse of desiring to note the still imperfectly known periodicity of disease, but, as an avowed practical habit, merely looks on whilst the patient either recovers or dies, we may begin to fear that the relief of the sick—which is assumed to be the main object of the Profession—is in danger of being wholly lost sight of, and the patient of both unwillingly and unconsciously becoming only an object of interest, so far as he contributes to the philosophical recreations of a few medical *savans*.

The gift of healing—for it is a gift—is quite distinct from the talent of investigating the elementary formation of the human frame in its natural or diseased state: the one is the power of acquiring knowledge, the other that of applying it; for, after all, pathology only amounts to contemplation, while the therapeutic art necessitates action, and it would seem that, in addition to the perseverance and observation ordinarily required for the first, the faculty of invention, and a not inferior exercise of reason, must be called into play in order to constitute the second.

But if any successful explorers of structural change have become so elevated by the extent of their scientific investigations as to bring them to the

conclusion that they have reached so exalted a pitch of intellectual polish and refinement, by scholastic disquisition, recondite learning, or abstruse study, and their whole mind has been so absorbed by their vast stores of pathological observations that they deem their mettle too high for anything but the detection and definition of disease; that methods of treatment are beneath their notice, and they thus become indifferent as to what practice they adopt, or whether they prescribe anything at all, then we shall be best able to estimate the standard of those men, not by any longer regarding distressed human nature from their side, but by taking the directly opposite point of view, and inquiring for a moment what probable opinion Nature may have formed of them. I must here claim the privilege of enduing her with a temporary ideal personification, and ask you to call to mind how patient, and yet inexorable, she is under wrong treatment, and how grateful and rapidly progressive under right; that she only wants, and looks, to be freed from circumstances of difficulty and oppression, in order to assert her power of recovery, which is ever ready to spring, like Hope, eternal in the human frame.

Nature having been, perhaps by long unsuccessful

treatment, vexed, thwarted, and annoyed by the negligence or by the misdirected efforts of those who ought as her ministers and attendants to have set her free and afforded her relief; having been placed in their hands whose business and vocation it is to gather as much as from occasions they may glean, and to ascertain the cause, whatever it may be, to others unknown, that afflicts her thus, and who are bound to make their presence and their practices pleasant as well as helpful to her. It will be remembered that the individuals who undertook to manage and control Hamlet were altogether of inferior calibre, that, although his system was in many respects deranged and out of gear, his intellect was more keen, and his capacity of far higher range than theirs. Nature may not inaptly be supposed to address her ancillary attendants in similar language to that in which he speaks to these hypocritical friends,—hypocritical, insomuch as while they pretended readiness to render him assistance, they were, in fact, serving the interests of others and their own — compelled also by him to admit their inability to command the use of a simple musical instrument to any utterance of harmony, because

they had not the skill — and to exclaim in the same indignant and sarcastic strain—

Why look you now, what an unworthy thing you make of me. You would play upon me ; you would seem to know my stops ; *you would pluck out the heart of my mystery* ; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass : and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ ; yet cannot you make it speak. Why, do you think I am easier to be played upon than a pipe ? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me.

I.

The Mechanical and Physical Treatment of Disease.

Whatever difference of opinion may exist, of the morbid condition which gives rise to the formation of pus, or of its appropriate treatment, no question can arise in the case of thecal abscess, as to the demand for the relief of tension by prompt use of the knife.

However palpably great the superiority of the present plan of treatment of enteritis by rest and opium may be over the old practice, all other modes of treatment are at once superseded in the case of strangulated hernia, by the division of the stricture.

In ophthalmic practice, glaucoma fulminans has till recently refused to be amenable to any mode of treatment, even that of the full influence of mercury, that one of the last resources of the wandering thera-

peutic mind, but has yielded readily—and happily—to the relief of tension by iridectomy.

To mention one more instance,—the division, where practicable, of the membrane in that form of acute periostitis, which threatens not only the death of the entire shaft of the bone, but of limb and life also.

Again, engorgement of blood is so palpably revealed in many instances by post-mortem examination, that the embarrassment of the various organs through which it flowed in its necessary circulation through the system, is obvious. Practically, the recognition of this fact is immediately followed by the importance of lessening the amount of congestion by abstraction, by diminishing *ingesta*, by promoting *egesta*, by increasing the serous secretion from the mucous membrane of the alimentary canal; thus relieving the mesenteric and haemorrhoidal veins, through them the hepatic, the renal, the cardiac, the pulmonary, next in turn the cerebral by the jugular, the bronchial and spinal by the azygos.

It follows that in the case of haemorrhage from congested venous or morbidly weakened arterial vessels, whether haematemesis, haemorrhoidal flux, menorrhagia, haemoptysis, epistaxis, sanguineous apoplexy, &c., the mechanical relief of over-distended vessels

ought to be the first object of treatment; and I will only ask the question, whether astringents and styptics, and even stimulants, ammonia and brandy in apoplexy, gallic acid and turpentine in hæmoptysis, have not been too hastily and indiscriminately had recourse to, to say nothing of the external application of cold and ice, still further increasing the internal congestion. And this simple plan of relief proves of equal importance in some cases of general treatment: bronchitis will sometimes prove obstinate until it be adopted, and the urgent dyspnœa, the pallor, the debility, the cold-sweat of the dusky skin, refuse to yield till the congestion of the bronchial veins has been relieved through the azygos, the hepatic, the mesenteric, and so downwards to the minute intestinal.

This principle of relieving disease by taking off the load, and thus freeing the embarrassed function, is practised more generally than its exact purpose is defined, and expresses itself in various ways: recent facts have made the relief of a special disorder familiar to the minds of all; to be dependent, according to some, including the late Dr. Rigby, who gave particular attention to the hepatic function, on general treatment; according to others, on dilatation, because they

called to mind the fact that the peculiar feature of that organ was dilatability; and according to the tenets of a third class, by incision more or less free, as the advocates of a modern and a more audacious Surgery.

The existence of scybala—I crave your indulgence for reverting to elementary matters, but it is necessary to make clear the subject to be brought under your notice—argues the passing of a certain time for their formation, also that their presence is tolerated by the nervous system in a greater or less, in a higher or lower degree, altogether or not at all, from the most perfect indifference to the most violent resentment and irritation.

1. A gentleman of literary and scientific habits, but of irritable and sensitive brain, became the subject of maniacal excitement; an unclean patch on one side of his tongue led to the administration of a simple mercurial and rhubarb purge, which to my surprise completely relieved his symptoms, and this not only once but on two or three subsequent occasions.

2. About twenty years afterwards, a similar distressing mental state, accompanied by illusions, supervened in the case of an elderly lady, who had been frequently subject for twenty-five years to violent

attacks of neuralgia of the external respiratory nerve, which seemed to require large doses of quinine and morphia; the same simple means not only relieved the perturbed mental condition, but, to my surprise again, swept away the neuralgia also.

3. A patient of studious habits and quiet gentle manners became subject to sudden paroxysms of spasmody dyspnœa, attended by some general derangement of health; several careful examinations by highly competent men resulted in the opinion that the probable cause of the imperfect respiration, obscure physical signs, and generally-unsatisfactory condition of thorax which presented itself, was aneurism: similar simple treatment, continued for some length of time, restored the patient to gradually improving health, leading to the conclusion that functional derangement, obstruction, and irritation were the cause of illness.

The practical idea that presents itself floating palpably on the surface of these somewhat exceptional cases of reflex irritation is, that the amount of disturbance in the system is not in the ratio of the disturbing cause so much as in the susceptible condition of the system acted on by it, and that the same cause is capable of producing effects varying

both in kind and in degree according to different circumstances, existing not only in different but in the same person. And we may gather this useful deduction, that as it is difficult to distinguish accurately during life what proportion of the symptoms depend upon organic, and what upon functional causes—as it makes all the difference whether the spark fall upon the cold impassive stone, on tinder, or on gunpowder,—it becomes a matter of great importance to invent and pursue the right plan of treatment, and by doing this habitually we shall be occasionally rewarded by obtaining unexpected results; but the twig has been so strongly drawn towards the one-sided light of pathological inquiry, that the tree of medical practice has grown up much inclined away from its original intention, the mind has been so exclusively bent in the direction of structural disease, and attention so much diverted from investigation of treatment, that results most important to the patient have not infrequently been missed. Let us contrast this state of things with Sir Isaac Newton's answer to the question, How have you achieved your discoveries? "By always intending my mind." But we were fast approaching a remarkable paradox: that in successfully conducting some

cases, we do not treat actually the organic disease on which they depend, we only take it into account. In order to illustrate my meaning, we must refer to Dr. Hyde Salter's work on Asthma.

The amount of dyspncea, or the sense of it, is not proportionate to the amount of injury inflicted on the respiratory organs; pneumonic consolidation of the lung to an extent that shall prove rapidly fatal produces less urgent and distressful dyspncea than a degree of asthmatic contraction of bronchial tubes that may be borne with impunity for a week; the circumstances of phthisis are similar. I have detected this curious law, that the amount of dyspncea and sense of oppression does not depend upon the amount of injury inflicted, nor even on the sudden accession of symptoms, but on the remediability of the abnormal condition; not on the extent of structural change, but on the amount of relief the condition admits of and calls for.

Disease of the heart may exist for years without seriously interfering with health till some pneumonic complication, the result of cold, causes embarrassment by throwing additional duty upon it. Take again the case of the kidney damaged by chronic granular disease, or by a recent attack of scarlatina;

in the later case particularly it frequently happens that attention is not called to the patient till a chill, or some other cause, throws an undue amount of duty on the damaged organ. What is the plan of treatment? The recognition certainly of the pathological state, but not necessarily the attempt to rectify it: we cannot aspiringly attempt to restore the organically damaged structure, nevertheless we may do a welcome work yet, by studying fully the compensating power of Nature—for there it is, silently, patiently, and certainly awaiting assistance; we may give much relief by the good old rule, the simple plan, the removal of *lædentia*, and afterwards enhance it by the institution of *juvantia*. The imperfection of therapeutics does not lie in the want of medicines, but of the knowledge how to select and apply them; not in the want of power, but the absence of conscious possession of it, and of the requisite skill to use it. One source of difficulty in administering medicines beneficially is the deficiency of certain and accurate knowledge of their uses and effects, so that want of faith in physic really means that want of confidence which arises from imperfect knowledge of the subject, which shelters and excuses itself behind the acknow-

ledged power of recovery with which our nature is endowed.

Our remedies oft with ourselves do lie,
Which we ascribe to Heaven. The fated sky
Gives us free scope, only doth backward fall
Our slow designs, when we ourselves are dull.

It has been too confidently asserted, that disease is referable to diminution of power, and assumed, with some unfairness,—that previous opinion had ascribed, erroneously, to increase of vital action that which would have been, perhaps, more correctly attributed to derangement and perversion of proper function.

The hasty adoption of the first hypothesis has led to the too generally adopted plan of administering stimulants in illness. It is one thing to treat disease, and quite another to support the patient until the illness has passed by; and, although it is undoubtedly preferable to uphold strength than to depress vital power, still, regarding the too prevalent and indiscriminate use of stimulants, as one single fixed idea, adopted as a principle of action, going straight on without turning to the right or left, in spite of all obstacles, and notwithstanding all obstructions, however superior in its effects, or successful in its results, or like the most brilliant

cavalry charge that the world ever saw, magnificent in its course, however extensively it may constitute the Practice, still it is not the Art of Medicine.

In no instance has the advance of pathology, without corresponding improvement in treatment, been more strongly illustrated than in that of fever.

Till recently, the practice of one of our first hospitals has been to prescribe ammonia as a matter of course ; without entering upon the question whether typh. fever be one of the conditions of system in which ammonia is retained in the blood, as a result of that condition in which destructive metamorphosis is in excess of nutrition, or how far the presenting symptoms be those attributed to the absorption of ammonia, or at least intensified by it, the propriety of such a plan, especially as one of routine, is sufficiently questionable to teach us not to be too loud in denouncing the name of an obnoxious form of empiricism, when some of us may have been unintentionally following a similar absurdity of practice to that which characterises that peculiarly impracticable theory which first declared its existence by raising its discordant voice

in precocious disparagement of its only parent. It was ever an unsound and degenerate offspring, inheriting no constitution, and possessed of no system, save that of sophistry on the one side, and credulity on the other. One obvious course is before us, to raise high the standard of a system of practice planted on the application of sound reason to any extent of accurate knowledge; not abstaining from hypothesis, but rigorously comparing hypothesis with facts; thus to assume to ourselves the legitimate power belonging to rational medicine, and leave all forms and denominations of heterodox treatment to the advocates of the "*pathies*." The treatment of fever demands not only a comprehensive knowledge of its nature and features, its different circumstances and causes, but also due consideration of its periodicity and progressive stages.

In regard to treatment, it should be carefully determined when to act and when to do nothing, when to administer stimulants and when to avoid interference by injudicious depletion. Hydrochloric acid as a universal remedy is as indefensible as any other. Meanwhile another vibration of the pendulum advocates the administration of milk in

fever, as superseding to some extent that of stimulants. *Vinum lac serum: lac vinum febrium.* In all conditions of disease, regulation of diet is obviously of the greatest importance. The late Dr. Graves of Dublin was quite justified in the feeling of satisfaction which he expressed in making the request that it should be recorded as his epitaph that *He fed fevers.*

But the monument more durable than brass should be reserved for him who teaches us most perfectly to eliminate the poison of fever. One step in this direction is the adoption of means to improve the vitiated state of the blood. Elimination of the poison of fever, cholera, pyemia, &c., must not be ignored on account of its difficulty and obscurity; in acute rheumatism we can help the imperfect sanatory, the wasting and enfeebling effort of Nature that bathes the patient in profuse sweat in her endeavour to get rid of the materies morbi, be it lactic acid or what not, by colchicum, by the salts of potash, or by the compulsory exosmosis of cantharidine vesication. The test tube will avail us here more than the necroscopic scalpel, for Nature requires to be unlocked before she can be unloaded; and if we are to cure disease, in contradistinction to looking on until it

shall have passed by, we must take off the oppressing load, and we must remove the cause.

However admirable the effect of Dr. Chapman's ice-bags applied to the spine in cholera may prove in giving tone to the nervous system, and thus counteracting exhaustion—which, as well as the profuse discharge from the bowels, is the effect of the poison on the system—it does not tend to cure the disease. The rice-water evacuations constitute an imperfect effort of Nature to get rid of the poison, which appears to be only perfectly eliminated by that flow of bile which somewhat contradictorily gives the name to the disease while it ironically points out the means of cure.

The great contrariety of opinion, and frequent change of treatment that has too often characterised practice of medicine, indicate a want of clear outline, and accurate definition of elementary principles, but

Not in vain the doctor's strivings, not by chance the currents flow;
Error mazed, but truth directed, to their certain goal they go.

In referring to the life of Hunter, it appears that about the year 1785 he began to suffer from a very painful and distressing affection of the heart and arteries, which succeeded to an attack of gout, and

to which he continued liable for the remainder of his life. It is well known that he died in a paroxysm of angina in 1793. The symptoms alluded to consisted of irregular spasmodic affection of the face, arms, chest, and stomach, causing agonizing pain, and ending in syncope. The probable rationale of these attacks appears to be the action of some irritant poison—say that of gout—upon the susceptible condition of certain nerves. There can be little doubt that his arterial system was not at this time in a healthy condition ; yet as these attacks did not exist continually, but were excited only occasionally, it is a fair inference that this state was amenable to therapeutic action, distinct from any attempt to cure the existing organic disease.

We come next to a class of disease in which the mechanical difficulty of sanguineous congestion, obstructed functional disturbance, and susceptible condition of nervous system are all more or less involved, exercising their conjoint unfavourable influence. No suffering, says Dr. Ormerod, can compare with that of orthopnoea ; and it were indeed a sad story to tell how patients with disease of the heart die, to describe the tragedies, so to speak, of the medical wards of our large hospitals.

But when the heart is full of innermost distress,
 Shall we be doomed to stand inactive by,
 And watch the body's pain and agony,
 Which human efforts tend not to make less ?

When thus organisical disease invades the structure of the heart, the dark and turgid column of the blood, still charged with its impurities effete, chokes up the avenues of life instead of bringing in its tranquil course the healthy stream of life-renewing function ; the flatulent distended stomach still more blocks up the way rebelliously, and all the livid and distorted form struggles for breath, and painfully holds on the pillowing support, and anxiously looks round for help imploringly ; for, wearied and worn out with unremitting toil to keep in life, sleep and rest it cannot, nor lie down.

And is there nothing we can do but give the silent shrug, and hopelessly look on ; then turn away, and leave the suffering patient to endure the pang and bitterness of death many times over, and so pass along ?

Shall we not rather try—by abstraction, small, of blood, by keeping up the sluggish flow of bile, renal excretion, alvine dejection, by acting on secretions generally—lightening the load ; next remove with care all source of irritation, continuous, con-

tiguous, and remote ; do our best to free and cleanse the foul system of the perilous stuff that weighs upon the heart, and so prepare the way for gentle stimulation, for stereotyped prescription of ammonia, and the full effect of the next sweet oblivious antidote ; endeavouring thus to turn the turmoil of the over-laboured heart into the even tenour of its way, relax the tension of the heaving chest, and give the grateful patient breath to say, I find relief, I die ; but easily.

II.

Diseases of the Nervous System.

We are but imperfectly acquainted with the subject of nerve-waste, or rather loss of nervous power, which is highly interesting, whether as regards the form where the generation of nerve-power is deficient or its waste abnormally rapid. Recovery from exhaustion is quick in some persons and slow in others ; the latter class comes most frequently under medical supervision. As the subject is somewhat intangible and difficult to trace, we are in some measure obliged to have recourse to indirect means of investigation. Our information is partly derived from the effects of remedies,—*naturam morborum ostendit curatio*: an imperfect source, for the prescrip-

tion of these is too frequently empirical ; we do not clearly know how the so-called tonics act, and we are still more uncertain as to the effects of narcotics, whether they act by supplying the deficient element, or by themselves affording food for waste ; and although the question remains unsolved, it is for a time happily set at rest by the production of sleep. Next arises the vexed question of tobacco, as a useful sedative or a mere indulgence. With regard to the action of tea, especially of green tea, if its effect be to lower the heart's action and reduce the frequency of respiration, and so mechanically lessen the supply of blood to the brain, or if it be simply to stop waste, it is easy to see that it would be apt to act as an irritant, and keep awake those who are not the subject of that particular form of waste—for all active agents that do not repair go to oppress. This suggests inquiry into the lax condition which is ready to receive, and the irritable state which rejects medicaments, from the highest degree of toleration to utter repugnance to the smallest dose ; and shows the importance of studying the opposite effects of ergotine and strychnine, of opium and belladonna on the nervous system, and of belladonna and digitalis on the heart.

Coffee is more effectual against the effects of cold than alcohol, because it not only stops waste, but according to Dr. Smith is a cardiac stimulant. Opinions as to not only the efficacy, but the actual effects of stimulants, are very different, and fiercely contested in proportion as their real action is imperfectly understood. If the opinion of Brodie be correct, that wines and alcohol do not give real power to the nervous system, but merely uphold strength while it is being expended, several of the phenomena of its use and abuse are explained. Without discussing the effects of its excessive use, it would appear that the impunity or otherwise with which it is indulged, depends to some extent upon the amount of exertion taken during its influence: to instance two extremes, the comparative impunity of post-prandial indulgence, and the contrast of the evil effects of the morning glass of sherry substituted for breakfast, with the day's work in prospect. The subject of delirium tremens escapes for a time, till the shock of an accident or some other circumstance proves to be an exciting cause; and according to the same hypothesis, the predisposition of the intemperate to heat apoplexy is still more obvious, because such persons live as it were on the brink of nervine bankruptcy, and all borrowing incurs a

larger debt to be repaid hereafter. Heat apoplexy is acknowledged to be a paralysis or paresis of the respiratory tract, giving rise to sanguineous congestion of lung from want of power to maintain circulation; cerebral congestion and extravasation ensue as a secondary result, the structure of the brain being free from appreciable lesion. Stimulants and the tonic cold are the appropriate remedies. This does not contradict what has been previously said of other forms of apoplexy, but opens the question as to the best means of promoting contraction of vessels—this must necessarily vary with different states. Here the illustration of Dr. Billing is readily brought to mind, whether to take bricks out of the cart, or to flog the tired horse up the hill—a practice which, if it does not issue in triumph, results in cruelty.

The effects of over-exertion, still more of dissipation, are more serious in the intemperate, because the structure generating nerve-force being reduced to a state of greater exhaustion, is thus rendered more liable to molecular change. As a correlative statement it may be remarked here, that whatever materially interferes with the generating power of nerve-vesicle, or the conducting power of nerve tubular fibre, constitutes paralysing lesion; and this definition includes all forms, whether of organic

change, functional derangement, or that condition in which abnormal expenditure is largely in excess of supply, viz., the state of paresis.

A certain expenditure of nerve-power predisposes to paralysis; a greater degree, especially when combined with depression from moral or emotional causes, tends to insanity: excessive use or expenditure of a natural function causes the first, the perverted use or abuse of the function leads to the latter. Some confusion of idea and consequent misapprehension appears to have arisen from losing sight of a simple verbal definition: we speak of a patient being depressed, and again of his having rallied, the idea thus conveyed to the mind is that of simple elasticity; but to examine the matter more closely, that which is spoken of as an impression or depression, is an actual loss of power or interruption of supply. The shock of an accident is an illustration of this; and it becomes an interesting question how far this is a mechanical effect, in the same way that the magnetism of a mass of iron is deranged by a severe blow. It should be borne in mind that in such cases we are not dealing with steel springs, but with a body in which waste and repair are continually going on: we are speaking, in fact,

of the relative proportions between these two processes ; and the state of depression, or more properly paresis, resembles all matters of currency in depending upon the degree of solvency of the bank and the amount of assistance which may be given to it from without.

This brings us to another subject. The moral emotions are allowed to have a more powerful effect on our frame than any amount of intellectual exertion and excitement, the link between the two, produces more speedy exhaustion than physical or mental labour. Although the heart is the reputed seat of the affections, their real centre would be more correctly described as that portion of the nervous system which regulates the action of the heart ; and as we cannot properly treat the physical conditions of blood-vessels and other structures without taking into account the nerve-power which regulates them, neither, in a higher sense, can we treat lesions of the nervous system without recognising the moral power which sustains or depresses it, and thus it not infrequently happens that, in order to relieve the disorders of the body, we must first minister to the mind diseased and pluck from the memory the rooted sorrow.

It is present to the mind of all, that the blood-

vessels are placed under the control of two classes of nerves: one derived from the sympathetic, producing contraction of calibre; the other, connected with the cerebro-spinal, presiding over dilatation.

The glands are similarly supplied with two classes of nerves—

1. The sympathetic, producing contraction of the secreting vessels.
2. The cerebro-spinal, ramifying in the immediate vicinity, influencing dilatation.

The experiments of M. Claude Bernard have shown that the following phenomena occur after division of the sympathetic:—

1. Dilatation of vessels, with increased rapidity of circulation;
2. Impeded interchange between blood-vessels, arterial blood retaining much of its venous character;
3. Increase of temperature, and
4. Of absorption;
5. Increase of muscular irritability, of temperature of surface, of vascularity, and general sensibility of cerebro-spinal nerves, constituting *hyperesthesia*;
6. Function of secretions are deranged;
7. As long as animals are kept in good condition they do not suffer from division of sympathetic; all

excito-motory functions, even those of reproduction, are performed, but if condition be reduced the health fails proportionately.

Dr. Stevenson, of Edinburgh, has compared the symptoms of rickets with the phenomena resulting from division of the sympathetic—

1. Increased vascular action, visible pulsation of carotid ;
2. Increased temperature of body, and local sweating, especially during sleep ;
3. Increased nervous susceptibility and desire to be cool, indicated by kicking off the bed-clothes.

In *Mollitus Ossium* we find a similar class of symptom, only associated with the wasting of bone-structure, instead of, as in rickets, interfering with its development ; and although subjects of this disease are mostly weakly persons, who had experienced more or less privations, almost all had been subject either to excessive expenditure of strength or to anxiety of mind.

Moreover, both classes of case are subject to excess of phosphates in the urine, and phosphorus, we know, enters largely into the composition both of nerve and bone ; and as not only the contraction and dilatation of vessels, but the secretions of the glands, and the

absorption, the deposit and repair of tissues are regulated by nerve influence, the impairment of power of the nervous system by exhaustion from excessive use or effort is still further increased and promoted by the depression arising from mental emotion; and we cannot but recognise the fact that this cause leads to alteration of secretion, to impairment of structure and waste of tissue as certainly and directly as actual division by the knife, in fact, to a state of paresis more or less complete, either by simple leakage, or impairment of vaso-motory power in its most minute ramifications; also, that different constitutions and states of health are variously affected thereby,—the phosphatic diathesis being perhaps that which is most predisposed to it; the effect is similar in other temperaments, though it may not be equally capable of demonstration.

The excessive loss of phosphates is found to be coincident with acute mania, with paralysis from excessive waste, and that caused by lesion of the spinal cord. Again, the decomposition of urea leads to the evolution of ammonia and deposits of the earthy phosphates; in another class of case the vice of system is associated with profuse acid perspirations. In all forms arising from these various causes, the

main object of treatment is obviously the restoration to the system of the lost material, and the internal administration of phosphoric acid has been recommended as the readiest means of accomplishing this; but how far does this plan resemble the task of endeavouring to fill the vessel of the Danaides? how far is it treating the symptoms, instead of remedying the cause? If we revert to the physiology of digestion, we find that the gastric juice secreted by the gastric glands consists principally of hydrochloric and other acids, and pepsine; and it is worthy of remark that several cases of paralysis, taking most frequently the form of paraplegia, have come under my notice, the main exciting cause of which was anxiety of mind. In these, treatment by direct tonics, steel, quinine, and even strychnine failed to produce a good effect, but steady and gradual improvement followed the administration of nitro-hydrochloric acid, persevered in for some length of time. The same treatment is sometimes successful in non-uniting bone after fracture. This gives rise to the hypothesis that anxiety of mind and other sources of mental depression cause paresis of the sympathetic in a greater or less degree: that this becomes associated with the spinal paresis in the production of paralysis

in different forms; also that the same cause influences the glandular secretions more or less, and especially that of the gastric juice—the very fountain, as it were, of all nutrition,—either by deranging the original secretion and making it defective, or indirectly causing the hydrochloric acid to enter into some abnormal combination.

As an instance of this alteration of secretion let us take that of a mother subjected to the influence of strong emotion; she suckles her infant, which immediately falls into convulsions and perhaps dies. Death here is almost as instantaneous as that of the lady on the Schilthorn*, though it is not by electric shock, but by altered secretion of milk,—the almost tangible result of emotion. Conjoin this with the fact that the effect of venous congestion on the brain is equivalent to that of anæmia. A member of this Society* has pointed out that mania is one of the results of disease of the right side of the heart, which causes impeded return from cerebral circulation—the so called determination of blood to the head.

We are here led to a very important question, how far insanity is the effect of exhaustive cerebral paresis, or dependent upon alteration of molecular

* Dr. Daldy.

structure of brain, proof of which has hitherto defied pathological investigation ; or whether, in some forms at least, it is not caused by the introduction into the cerebral circulation of some altered or perverted secretion, not necessarily affecting the general nutrition of the body, but having a special affinity for producing irritation of the brain, in the same way that the poison of gout affects certain joints.

One more circumstance connected with the depressing effect of anxiety deserves to be mentioned, —its tendency to cause derangement of digestive function, and consequent alteration of the nutritive qualities of chyme, leading to imperfect renewal of certain structures. Fatty degeneration of the heart has been observed to be associated with phosphatic diathesis, and to belong, if not actually to constitute, a class of case liable to angina ; and if the hypothesis of the connection between these two conditions be correct, it appears to demonstrate the direct influence of moral emotion over the physical condition of matter,—that even

The passions, prejudices, interests,
That sway the meanest being, the least touch
That moves the finest nerve,
And in one human brain
Causes the faintest thought, becomes a link
In the great chain of Nature.

Allusion has been before made to John Hunter's state of health for seven or eight years before his death, to his liability to spasm about the præcordia which was frequently re-produced by slight causes, by trifling bodily exertion, and more frequently and especially by mental irritation to which uncontrolled hastiness of his temper rendered him particularly obnoxious; so sensible was he of this that he was wont to say his life was in the hands of any rascal who chose to tease and annoy him. Let none presume to judge Hunter for this infirmity of temper, which perhaps was a physical imperfection over which he had not perfect control; but rather blame the thoughtless, inconsiderate, selfish conduct of those who provoked it.

How different is the true appreciation of his high character. His powerful mind was unceasingly stimulated by an ardent desire to forward the acquisition of those branches of knowledge which appeared to him best fitted to promote the improvement of his profession; to this object he devoted every hour he could spare from his daily avocations, or snatch from the time allotted by others to sleep, and to advance this end he was

always ready to sacrifice the claims of worldly prudence and self-interest.

He took up the Glass of Time, turned it in his glowing hands ;
Every moment lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.

He took up the Harp of Life, struck upon its chords with might,
Smote the chord of Self, which, trembling, passed through duty out of sight.

It is well known that some personal differences existed between him and his colleagues at St. George's Hospital, and that in the morning of the day in which he died, in anticipation of attending a proposed meeting of the Governors, he expressed his apprehension lest some dispute should occur, and that if it did, it would certainly prove fatal. He arrived at the Hospital, attended the Board, and, in the course of his remarks, made some observation which one of his colleagues thought it necessary flatly to contradict. Hunter immediately ceased speaking, retired from the table, and struggling to suppress the tumult of his emotion, hurried into the adjoining room, where he immediately uttered a deep groan, and fell lifeless into the arms of Dr. Robertson.

We must go yet a little further, and follow him to the dead-house. The body was examined after death. The viscera of the belly and head were

found to be loaded with blood, but otherwise nearly in a natural state. The carotid arteries, and their branches within the skull, were in parts thickened and ossified. The heart was found to be the chief seat of disease, the pericardium was unusually thickened, but did not contain much fluid; the heart itself was small, appearing too little for the cavity in which it was contained—its diminished size being the result of wasting, and not of condensation of its fibres—the mitral valves were much ossified, &c. The diseased condition of the heart must necessarily have made it unequal to its work for some time previous. At the moment of death it appears to have been empty, forming a marked contrast with the venous congestion of the head and abdominal viscera. Referring once more to the control which the sympathetic exercises over the contraction of the blood-vessels, at the head of which we must place the heart, it is a fair presumption that as, on the one hand, the effect of anxiety and the depressing passions is indirectly to cause dilatation by means of vaso-motory paresis, that of anger and indignation, on the other, is directly to excite the vaso-motory contraction of vessels,—in the instance before us, by tonic spasm,

producing a confirmed systole, a tension interrupting and arresting the circulation of the blood, and so putting a stop to life. The flushing of the face, the knotting of the temporal and frontal veins, which mark the paroxysm of anger, tend to confirm this hypothesis, because, in addition to the cardiac and arterial action being intensified, respiration is also temporarily suppressed, circulation thus becomes more or less completely arrested, even to the extent of producing rupture. It was said of Cæsar,—

Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms
Quite vanquished him ; then burst his mighty heart.

Within a short space of time two fatal cases of apoplexy came under my notice : in both instances the patient had been the subject of long continued anxiety, which was not communicated to any living person, and thus became intensified. The first was preceded by chronic asthenic paralysis, with the attendant symptoms of phosphatic diathesis. In this instance the anxiety was coupled with feeling of personal regret at the failure of speculations which had caused pecuniary difficulty and embarrassment throughout life. The second instance exemplified the form of apoplexy with extravasation described

by Abercrombie ; and in the course of the illness it happened more than once that the cerebral congestion, which was the sure precursor of insensibility and further extension of paralysis, was attended by the above-named flushing of the face and marked fulness of the frontal and temporal veins, while the patient with clenched fist denounced the villainy of the partner who had ruined him.

Thus vaso-motory paresis, the effect of the depressing passions of anxiety and regret, was the characteristic feature of the first ; and cerebral congestion and extravasation, the result of vaso-motory arterial and cardiac tension, caused by the exciting passion of anger, that of the second ; and these two instances appear to illustrate, by a real pathological distinction and contrast, the metaphorical alternative which conducts inevitably to the same fatal issue.

Or ever the silver chord be loosed or the golden bowl be broken.

Thus anger excites, fear and grief depress, anxiety adds irritation to depression, and disappointment exhausts ; it is the canker-worm that eats into the heart of vitality, and overthrows the structure by sapping its foundation.

There like a scattered column lies the man.

It does not alter the individual, it only changes his

position; the character of Wolsey was the same before his fall as after, for

His promises were as he then was, mighty;
But his performance as he is now, nothing.

From our experience of the effects, it appears that anger, fear, grief and disappointment affect the system from their vaso-motory influence, but that anxiety becomes additionally pernicious by extending its effects to the glandular system as well, altering the secretions.

Irritability, the effect of brain fag, over-work, and worry, attacks the moral strength through depression and exhaustion of the cerebro-spinal system, as well as that of the sympathetic. It is a defect that mars the perfectness of the character, like the moth that frets the garment, in contradistinction to the fair wear and use of the faculties, which by their healthy action give to the brain and nervous system the stimulus of repair, so that their strength is renewed like the eagle's. Many are subject to it: Sturt,* the enterprising traveller,

* When the obstacles and difficulties of his expedition to discover the river Murray increased, when all his men became exhausted, and one lost his senses, he says: I became captious, and found fault when there was no occasion, and lost the equilibrium of my temper in contemplating the condition of my companions. For the complicated dangers, which frequently made him shudder, and wonder at the same time how they were

in the hour of fatigue ; the calm Washington ; the Iron Duke ; the artist whose weekly productions instructed as well as amused half the habitable globe. It is apt to increase as age advances and strength declines ; so that it might be said as truly as of ambition, that it is

The last infirmity of noble minds.

Some of us are only too liable to it ; so let us hear

escaped, entailed severe and continuous labour on his men, and the addition of great privations overcame their determined resistance and almost superhuman efforts. They lost their spirit, and their whole bodies swung with an awkward and laboured motion ; their arms appeared to be nerveless, their faces became haggard, their persons emaciated, their whole nature was exhausted, and they frequently fell asleep in the midst of their painful and almost ceaseless exertions. No murmur, however, escaped them, nor did one complaint intentionally reach me. I did frequently hear them, when they thought I had dropped asleep, complain of severe pains and great exhaustion, and say, I must tell the captain to-morrow. To-morrow came, and they pulled on, as if reluctant to yield to circumstances. Yet most of these men were convicts. The contrast here is complete. The combined effects of fatigue, privation, and anxiety, producing irritability and feelings towards his faithful men which the superior mind of the commander acknowledged to himself to be unworthy and unjust ; and the same causes, devoid of anxiety, leading only to loss of spirit and hope on the part of the men, and notwithstanding their comparatively uncultivated faculties, developing only firmer adherence to discipline and more faithful attachment to their leader. One set of circumstances made these men criminals, and another converted them into heroes. Here is matter of consideration for the legislator and psychologist both.

what Brodie says of it, in relation to one of the brightest ornaments of our profession.

Bailie was not originally, as I apprehend, a man of great physical power. It seemed to me that he found exertion either of body or mind to be inconvenient and painful beyond a certain amount. He was nervous and irritable ; and while others looked with some sort of admiration, if not with envy, at his large practice, he complained of it as a great hardship, and I have no doubt felt it at the time to be so. His professional brethren had little sympathy with these complaints, and smiled at them, yet they were well founded ; *realities to him* ; and I suspect that he would have been a happier man, and have lived longer, if he had met with a smaller amount of professional success. The irritability of temper, to which I have referred, led him at times to say hasty and somewhat ungracious things, for which he was always sorry, and apt to reproach himself afterwards.

Brodie himself appears to have had a sound rather than a robust constitution, and it is not improbable that the depression of spirits to which he alludes in his Essays was to some extent the result of asthenia ; nevertheless, he has left behind him the substance

of more philosophical remarks than Sir Astley Cooper, whose sanguine temperament made him, in his turn, the man of action rather than of reflection. But we must not overlook another portrait of Dr. Baillie:—

His reputation was of the highest order, as it depended upon the opinion entertained of him by the members of his own profession, who always looked up to him as the fittest person to be consulted in cases of difficulty or danger. Their preference of him is to be attributed partly to his knowledge and sagacity, especially in what related to the diagnosis of disease, and partly to his general character, which led him to be always liberal and considerate to others, at the same time that he never seemed to be anxious about his own reputation, or to take any trouble to obtain peculiar credit for himself. He had also another important qualification for the position of consulting physician. He not only had a very clear perception of the matter which was placed before him, distinguishing at once that which was essential from that which was merely incidental, but his habit of lecturing had given him a considerable command of language, which enabled him to explain a com-

plicated case in a way which was satisfactory to the patient and his friends. In these explanations he never gave his knowledge for more than it was worth, or pretended to know more than he knew in reality; and this simple and straightforward mode of proceeding was one reason why the public reposed in him a degree of confidence, which others of more ambitious pretensions were wholly unable to attain.

Brodie has enjoined the importance of cultivating the imagination as a part of education, and it is to be observed that this quality was one of the endowments of John Hunter's mind, which combined with observation and reflection contributed to give him the high stamp of genius. But when the magnetic needle of his faculties ceased to point in the direction of professional research, it was no longer kept straight by rectangular currents, but became deflected from the ordinary and proper usages of society; his manners were rude and uncultivated, and the deficient control of his temper, superadded, tended much to detract from the high position which not only his intellectual endowment but a certain nobleness of nature marked out for him.

Baillie possessed a fully acknowledged capacity for the high professional position which he held; and

not only a cultivated and well-balanced mind, and the comprehensiveness to grasp all the points of a case, but the more rare judicial quality of summing up, of reducing the whole matter into a clear concise opinion: in him a certain physical deficiency constituted the imperfection which dimmed the lustre of his character. It is a much more grateful task—

To further seek their merits to disclose,
Than drag their frailties from their dread abode.

III.

The Psychological Division of the Subject.

It has been remarked that, in these days, isolation of individual life is virtually as impracticable as that of any profession or calling, and it is difficult to avoid bringing the experience of our daily pursuits to bear upon the circumstances that come under our notice; and thus arises the most useful as well as the most natural application of that knowledge which each in his vocation daily acquires.

In the course of our profession, we have occasion to make use not only of our eyes and hands, but of our other senses and faculties, for we soon find that we have to deal not only with flesh and blood, but with the faculties of man's higher nature: we thus

arrive at the confines of the visible and invisible, at the brink which divides the material from the immaterial world; we have to confront scepticism, and are brought face to face with that blind technical unbelief which is on the lip rather than in the heart of man. We cannot withstand the conclusion that there are certain inherent principles in our nature, distinct from any mental endowment, which constitute the mainspring of our actions; and as the material substances, wood, stone, and iron, cannot be overstrained without their structures giving way, and causing more or less damage, so in a greater and higher degree is the infringement of these principles of our condition fraught with danger of evil consequences.

The physical man owes his superiority of form, his power of action and motion, his station, to the tall, the elevating, the strongly constructed, but ever yielding spine; not the centre of the nervous system, but the column upholding the capital which contains it. And when from inherent weakness, or disease, or from excess of superincumbent weight, the structure bends, the erect form becomes more or less prostrate, the stamp of dignity is lost: not only so, the strength of intellect is apt to pass into sharpness

and quickness, the judgment to be damaged in the direction of caprice, and the genial disposition to be lost in more or less acerbity.

In like manner the moral character owes its strength and integrity to the consciousness of liberty of action and the responsibility of free-will ; and if this quality be naturally feeble, or subject to undue oppression, the upright becomes bent, the straightforward tortuous and crooked, the imperfect perception of duty no longer excites that prompt motor performance, which stamps the high moral no less than the perfect physiological condition—for free-will degenerates into self-will, action is lost in indolence, firmness in waywardness, resolution in fickleness.

The educational question of the necessity of obedience is not raised here in the slightest degree ; but if the silken cord of authority be injudiciously tightened, when it should be slackened and removed, it becomes a painful girt, which soon becomes forged into the iron band which destroys both growth and health. The importance of making any repression of growth lateral instead of perpendicular should be borne in mind, if, like the pines of the forest, the youth is to grow straight up, clear of surrounding noxious influences ; for to dwarf the stature is to

stunt the morale. If the faculties of reason and observation be not cultivated together, *pari passu*, intellectual refinement tends only to scepticism, and so no less does repression of free-will tend to superstition; for the feebleness of the weak mind causes it to lean on authority, but it is no disparagement to the strong mind, that it fully acknowledges and bows to it. The most argumentative book in our language proves by analogy, that to refuse to acknowledge the principle of free-will and liberty of action, free agency, is to deny a fundamental principle of our condition here, and to fall into the timid error of fatalism; the creed of the sick man; and as a result of medical experience we learn, that improperly to circumscribe free individual action is to produce a state incompatible with health.

The morbid state thus generated constitutes one of the anomalies of medical practice, and the psychological condition of such patients is peculiar: they have a perfect consciousness of their capacity to manage themselves, and they desire to exercise it; but, from force of circumstances, they lack the power to *assert* it. Foiled in their attempt to gain their object by direct, they seek to establish it by indirect means. The intention of this mode of proceeding is

not obvious, and, unless patiently investigated, is very apt to be misunderstood and misinterpreted ; but inasmuch as, in the first instance, the course adopted is not voluntary, but compelled, as it were, by force of adverse circumstances, any attempt at coercion increases the evil : free-will, or rather free-agency being circumscribed, a depressed condition results, which, it is remarkable, is more readily produced by inverted than by strictly legitimate authority. One of the most marked instances that I have met with was that of a man originally powerful and resolute, but enfeebled by paralysis, hemiplegia, and the aphemia or aphasia of Broca. His intellect was sound, but loss of speech prevented him from making himself clearly understood—and gave him the appearance of incapacity ; he could not reconcile himself to the inverted authority which his wife and children sought, somewhat injudiciously, to exercise over him, so he took to his bed—declared his determination not to eat, and his resolution to die. In my temporary absence from home, the resident medical attendant of a neighbouring lunatic asylum was called in, who thought it necessary to administer nourishment by force. I shall never forget the expression of rage with which the patient described to me, the next

day, in his imperfect and broken articulation, the murderous treatment—as he termed it—of the preceding evening; the active fury of the living side forming a painful contrast to the other helplessly paralysed, and in this respect his physical condition was a true type of his moral—a demonstration equally violent and futile. By a very simple expedient he was restored to his usual condition in a very short time, and his expressions of gratitude were as great as his previous distress, and equally short-lived. *Vox et preterea nihil.*

It is not necessary to discuss the morality of the case, but only to notice a certain cause producing a certain effect; the infringement of free-agency generating wilfulness and obstinacy—an irregular distribution, instead of healthy action. The almost involuntary expression of censure for such conduct must be checked by the question—What are patients in this condition to do? what other course is open to them?

The following instance simulated ill health, but was not in any way dependent upon it:—

A young lady took to her bed, and could not be induced to leave it. Once, when got up by stratagem, she was chased all over the house, then

doubled upon her pursuers and took refuge once more in her stronghold—bed—which no threat or inducement could persuade her to leave. Matters having reached an impracticable crisis, the assistance and advice of the medical attendant was sought. He was met by the vociferous complaints of the father and three sisters, who one and all from their own point of view, and each in their own peculiar style, agreed in condemning the refractory conduct of the patient; and he, seeing no prospect of unravelling the mystery from their report of the matter, requested to see the patient alone. After a few preliminary remarks, he referred to a previous long illness as affording proof that in suggesting to her to make him the confidant of the element of difficulty, he could not possibly be influenced by any other object than that of desiring to act the part of a friend to her and her family. After a little hesitation, she said that all her proceedings met with so much objection and opposition on the part of her relations, and she was so constantly thwarted, that she was no longer a free-agent, and, as her representations were not attended to, her condition became so intolerable that she had no resource but to take to her bed.

These two cases presented at first sight an obscure and puzzling aspect, but they clearly show the importance of recognising individual responsibility to be a necessary condition of the *mens sana in corpore sano*.

Although paradoxical, it is nevertheless certain that the liability in man to be provoked into wilfulness and obstinacy exists in stronger degree in the more feeble organization of woman, to the extent of amounting under circumstances to utter desperation and recklessness. It is difficult to realize this, for it is a state that lies dormant so long, and breaks out so suddenly and unexpectedly, that the causes at work are far from being plain. We find examples of it in all stations of life.

The frequent instances of child-murder with which the press has lately seemed call to mind the very words of Lady Macbeth :—

Unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe top full
Of direst cruelty, make thick my blood,
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctions visitings of Nature
Shake my fell purpose.

For what real difference is there between the psychological state which realizes the intended

murder of King Duncan for the unscrupulous object of sovereign sway, and that which prompts the destruction of her own child by shutting its neck in a drawer in the desperate attempt to hide the loss of reputation? To her present state of mind

The only art her guilt to cover,
To hide her shame from every eye.

But, to trace the matter to the root, to dissect the nerve of action to its origin, the motive to its right sympathetic plexus. The individual course of action in either case is indicative of violent and irregular disturbance, and not of the soundness and firmness of moral courage. Lady Macbeth invokes alteration of natural condition at the outset, she does not appear to be so much influenced by vicious propensity, or a really depraved condition, as an active spirit of impulse roused by the irresolution of her husband, and want of confidence in his power to act. The incapacity of one on whom she ought naturally to rely in the moment of decisive action appears to give rise to an irritated state, and the apparently urgent, but really false necessity of the wicked purpose seems to instigate her to secure the accomplishment of his covetous design. Though apparently

selfish, her conduct is rather that of suicidal desperation in a bad cause. He was "not without ambition." She was possessed by "the illness should attend it." As he "would not play false," there was no alternative to her mind but that for his sake rather than her own, she yet must "wrongly win." History affords other examples of this.

In the second instance the strong initiative of desperate action, so utterly subversive of all maternal feeling, is not to be accounted for by abandonment to vice, or by the colliquative moral lapse which by the perversion and pollution of self-indulgence poisons the source of a deep feeling designed by the high nature of its purpose to be mutual. It is rather the reaction that ensues upon the discovery of betrayal of a trust reposed, an overwrought sense of necessity for exertion consequent upon awakening to the reality of desertion at the moment when help is most needed ; a truly distressing state of mind. I cannot but think that some members of one branch of our profession have placed themselves in a false position by failing to distinguish between the morbid cerebral condition which constitutes insanity, and the ill-regulated conduct which, from want of moral control, gives rise to

crime. No maudlin sympathy for the latter should be allowed to make justice uncertain and society insecure. But if ever the verdict of "temporary insanity" be admissible, it is in such cases as this.

The selfish brute force which never dreams of responsibility, or the reaction of retribution, until it becomes a startling reality, has its original type in the athlete Milo, whose consciousness of physical power prompted him to rend the oak, but did not lead him to think of the rebound.

The precept *Maxima pueris debetur reverentia* implies a jealousy of exposing to contamination the sense of innocence and justice, which, until it be contravened, exists in the minds of young children. Deeper still is the trust of woman in man a condition, a principle implanted in her nature. It is the infringement of this, in a greater or less degree, that excites the strong initiative of the apparently wilful but really desperate action alluded to. But this principle lies so closely hidden behind a facile exterior, or it may be in the apparently gentle disposition of a Beatrice Cenci, that it is passed over by outward observation till the force of some strong circumstance or the irritated con-

dition of disordered health makes it manifest. In every-day life we only see

The torrent's smoothness ere it dash below.

However irrelevant they may appear at first sight, the foregoing remarks are necessary to the consideration and right understanding of a disease of common occurrence, intractable, and at times even repulsive in its character, in many instances a very *opprobrium medicorum*; and because its nature has been only imperfectly comprehended, it has not unfrequently been aggravated, I had better say exasperated, by wrong treatment. It is thus described in the most recent work on the Practice of Medicine:—

A complex morbid condition of all the cerebral functions of a chronic kind, probably associated with some morbid state of the emotional or sensori-motor centres, and presenting every variety of alteration, so that the phenomena of hysteria simulate or mimic the phenomena of almost every other disease, while the most common and characteristic features of the affection are certain motorial changes of a convulsive nature and of paroxysmal occurrence.

The description is, like the disease, complex, in-

definite, obscure, leading to despair of all practicable understanding; so we will turn to that of the most lucid lecturer of the day:—A disease highly interesting and important, as well as obscure and difficult; the convulsive movements, the mental affection, and the unnatural sensations, depend upon some altered condition of the brain and nerves, &c.

Marriage often proves a cure, but sometimes it does not.

We will now consider a case as it actually occurred.

A violent paroxysm of hysteria was relieved at once by the exonerating effect of a copious enema of warm water; the patient fell into a sound sleep, and presented herself for observation the next morning with no sign of dishevelled hair, or disorder of habit or body, but clean, neat and tidy, clothed, and in her right mind.

But as the treatment of all such cases is not equally successful, we will suppose, for the sake of illustration, that this same patient had been drenched with cold water, after the most approved fashion of Sir Charles Clarke; and this remedy, however successful for the hysterical attack which is the effect of morbid over-excitement, will not

avail when the evil depends upon some source of irritation which requires to be removed. The already excited nervous system might have been still further stimulated by ammonia, or drugged with all the variety of fetid gums; and if the patient had still continued unrelieved, because the cause still remained undetected and unremoved, the case might probably have been deemed obstinate and tiresome, and the blame laid upon the patient, who might have been, and in fact not unfrequently has been, accordingly, loaded with vituperative invective, and so consigned to a system of provocative irritation, giving rise to the full amount of mental perversion and moral obliquity which experience proves the nature of such cases to be capable of. And a very pretty complication it sometimes is.

It is first to be remarked, of the instance before us, that although the name of the disease is derived from *η ιστερα*, that organ was not directly involved, if indeed it was in any way implicated in the production of the symptoms, and, if at all, it was by contiguous irritation.

The triple combination, which seems to constitute so many forms of disease, next presents itself for consideration.

1. The cause, a loaded intestinal canal.
2. The susceptible condition which, in fact, constitutes hysteria.
3. The favouring circumstance, fatigue from over-exertion coupled with depression consequent on undue excitement and anxiety to please. The patient was a respectable servant in a new situation.

This protean disorder presents certain peculiarities and anomalies which not only prevent the recognition of its true character, but lead to the supposition that it is imaginary, feigned, or even wilful or intentional. The nutrition of the body is not affected, mental power is not impaired, although it may be suspended, innervation is deranged, for the generation of nerve-power is feeble, and its distribution is irregular; but it is the sympathetic, the vaso-motory system, the moral power, that is at fault, either from exhaustion of the physical strength or the sensori-motor centres, or because, perhaps most frequently, the purposes of life are in some respect disappointed, and the paresis of disappointment not only saps the strength, but at the same time that it brings low the nervous system, also renders it peculiarly liable to irritable excitability from opposing and aggravating causes; and

the tendency of this form of vaso-motory paresis to produce hysteria in the young, is analogous to that of anxiety to cause paralysis in those more advanced in life.

Referring once more to the symptoms of heat apoplexy, insolation, the joint result of nerve-waste and the vaso-motory paresis of heat, occurring too in strong men, soldiers—we find enumerated among the symptoms, distressing hysterical state with great depression, and hyperæsthesia; and yet delicate women in a similar state of exhausted strength complain bitterly that physicians whom they consult in order to obtain relief taunt them with their incapability, and order them to be coerced, sledge-hammered, as the phrase is. With inability stamped on the face of it, it is remarkable that such an error should exist up to the present time; that it is only partial, is evident from the following. Call such a patient, says Dr. Handfield Jones, enfeebled neurolytic, hyperæsthetic, or what you will, or anything that implies that her physical mechanism is failing or out of gear, but cast no imputation on her immaterial character, perhaps braver than your own—I speak from self-condemning recollections of patients whose complaints I had got weary of listening to, but of the

honesty and reality of which I ultimately became convinced.

There is a similar asthenic condition of ill health dependent upon excess of nerve-waste, arising either from over-exertion or vaso-motory paresis, in which patients lie in bed, because exercise, instead of renewing strength, produces exhaustion, pain, diarrhoea, &c., or, as in the case above mentioned, because bed affords a safe retreat from vexatious persecution. This is termed the bed-case, and is quite distinct from hysteria, although it is sometimes mistaken for it.

There are several difficulties in the way of a just appreciation of this state. It is not the weight of an absolute burden that we have to estimate, but the relative strength to bear it: and it is not easy for the inconsiderate strong man rightly to judge the suffering weak woman, especially if he judges, as most persons are apt to do, by themselves; but he might remember that private patients have not the same object in malingering that soldiers have. The effect of exercise is to promote vaso-motory contraction and active arterial action; on the other hand, the relaxed state of depression favours venous congestion—fully bearing in mind the injunction of Paley, that “manful discharge of duty is the best remedy

against sinking of spirits," intrepid exertion is an impossibility to those who have not power of themselves, but want help in order to enable them to overcome the difficulty under which they labour: for "the spirit of man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?"

In these cases the expenditure of nervous power has been in excess of supply, and the state of exhaustion continues the disability; the irregular distribution of the nerve-force which remains masks and obscures, and apparently contradicts, the real condition. The exercise of force is not called for, as there is no dislocation, but the presence of obstruction and irritation does demand the removal of exciting and offending causes. We cannot determine the nervine condition of a paralysed limb till we have carefully watched and observed the futile attempts of the patient to move it; neither can we realize and appreciate the loss of nerve-power that characterises these cases, until the actual condition be tested by fair and just observation. Appearances are apt to give a false impression to a superficial view; but, having come to a right understanding, the object of treatment is clearly and emphatically not to increase vexation and irrita-

tion by unjust imputations, or still further to oppress the already helpless patient by coercion, or attempt to over-ride the existing difficulty, or even look on until the disease has passed by, but as far as is practicable to relieve the susceptible condition, and by hope and encouragement, and the substitution of graduated exercise for the apathetic stagnation of inactivity, to institute tonic vaso-motor contraction for the paresis of disappointment and the perverted secretion caused by worry; and I maintain that these are not merely ideal, but actual and practicable remedial agents. I am quite at a loss to find reason or precedent for adopting a system of coercion. The tendency of human nature to recur and lapse into evil by no means contradicts the existence of inclination in the direction of good, —far from it. But appeals to physical force are surely neither the best, nor even the right mode of promoting this. We cannot get rid of the fundamental conditions of our nature, but we are bound to free them as much as possible from surrounding harm, and in this difficult task we must remember that “Nature is often hidden, sometimes overcome, seldom extinguished; and that force maketh Nature more violent in the return.”—*Lord Bacon.*

It is a grave fault to mistake incapability for caprice, and a radical error of diagnosis to confuse the result of infringement of one or more principles of human nature with the symptoms of physical disease ; but it is a still more grievous error to fix upon the right-minded the imputation of wrong-doing. It is to be borne in mind that this, like almost every other disease, occurs in two classes of persons—the pure and the impure. In fact, a false nomenclature has given rise to erroneous views, and wrong interpretations of the patient's condition.

The amount of unhappiness which this state of health gives rise to is sometimes very great ; for the actual condition is often not seen, and consequently not recognised for some length of time. A high-spirited lady, aged twenty-six, the daughter of a medical man, was an invalid, and one feature of her illness was that she experienced great prostration of strength after very slight exertion. Her appearance indicated perfect health, although she was the subject of organic disease ; but some of her relatives, an aunt in particular, used to reproach her with the fanciful nature of her complaints. The patient became subject at times to severe attacks of symptomatic vomiting, which continued

for days and weeks together. The medical practitioner who attended the lady mentioned the case to me, and said he could always tell when the aunt had been there, and he wished her at Jericho. The history of this case appears to confirm the hypothesis above mentioned of the power of worry and other emotions to alter secretion and derange health.*

A patient, aged twenty-eight, is at the present time under my care, who has been the subject of weak health from childhood. In person she is stout, but pallid. Her condition is that of weak nerve-power, and she has been the subject of the so-called hysterical paralysis, from which, however, she completely recovered. The present attack is attributed by her family to emotion consequent upon the somewhat sudden death of her father—the paresis of grief. In the conduct of her case I have been most kindly and ably assisted by an old medical friend,

* However effectual or specific a palliative the hypodermic injection of morphia may prove for the pain or other symptoms attendant upon undue exhaustion of nerve-power, or the irritative effects of worry, &c., that is the true remedy which gives valid relief by removing the cause of ill-health, and the adoption of this also takes away all fear lest the demand for such remedies should become permanent: the suffering of the patient has only made them indispensable for a time.

who has been staying in the house. After some weeks of prostrate inability she was on the point of coming downstairs, and taking her place in the family circle, when her brother came to see her, and observing her walk across the room, exclaimed, If you can walk like that you can do anything. This assertion my colleague tested a few days after by taking her downstairs: she first went down a short flight and ascended, she then tried a second time; but her power was gone, and she was obliged to be helped up. On a previous occasion her nerve-power had come to an end on the staircase, and assistance was sent for out of doors to carry her up. The natural remark of the brother was in this case instigated by a medical friend, who said, if she went on in that way she would become bed-ridden—a statement quite at variance with the facts of the case.

I cannot protest too strongly against this *ex-officio* statement of medical friends, as pernicious in the highest degree. It has the appearance, at first sight, of doing good and kind service, but it is in reality an unjust and improper act, because it implies wrong-doing and neglect of duty on the part of those who have charge of the case: not only so, it is done

covertly behind the back, instead of being said to the face ; it is tantamount to secretly damaging another man's character and reputation ; it is, moreover, a double injustice, because it affects the patient as well as the medical attendant, and is one among many instances in which

Evil is wrought by want of thought,
As well as by want of heart.

It might also be said by want of sense, for in this instance the opinion so expressed was altogether wrong, and professional advice ought to correct and not to instigate such sources of unmerited discredit. I wish to call especial attention to the effects of this conduct on our patient ; for some days after her small amount of strength was knocked down, much to the annoyance of her medical friend and myself, we both remarked how much irritation and depression of the nervous system was caused by this untoward circumstance, although the patient herself would not acknowledge it.

I have no hesitation in saying that this style of proceeding is capable of prolonging such cases indefinitely, and I am by no means sure that I have not seen instances of this occult cause of chronic illness. The effect of this or any other cause of worry, or

deep mental emotion arising just as the patient is beginning to improve, is to throw her back, and cause a relapse, by wasting the small and slowly collecting stock of strength, which, it is to be remembered, is regained each time with increasing slowness and difficulty.

In my early attendance in this case, some cause that was not obvious seemed to retard progress, and I noticed a tone of great asperity in her remarks. One day it found vent: "I suppose," she said, in a half-sneering tone, "you are like the rest of them, and think my illness fancy; just as if I should not have been able to discover that myself, without seeking the first advice in London to be told of it?"

After coming down three days successively, this patient experienced a relapse; but now that her old medical friend has taken pains to point out to her family the real nature of the case, her recovery will follow as a matter of course, for there can be no doubt that it is the sympathetic complication, the moral difficulty which causes the obstruction, and retards the recovery of health.

Thus the functions of the three centres, the brain, spinal marrow, and sympathetic, are quite distinct and closely associated: in their infinite reticulation

they make up the fabric of the nervous system, which it is the province of the physician to unravel and to treat: they represent, severally, special sense, excito-motory power, vaso-motory control; and, conjointly, perception, action, and nutrition, which are subject to the direction and still higher influence of intelligence, will, and emotional passion: also the effect of this last immaterial quality upon the human frame is subject to the same laws of exercise and exhaustion, of waste and repair, which regulate the component parts of our bodies, and thus represents more strongly, and in a higher degree, the result of the use and abuse of our faculties—the sound and unsound consequences of good and evil.

| 1. Special sense. | Excito-motory power. | Vaso-motory control. |
|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 2. Perception, | Action. | Nutrition. |
| 3. Intelligence. | Will. | Emotional passion. |

Whatever derangement of system may have been remarked upon in the performance of my task, I have not for one moment swerved from my allegiance to the Sovereign Mistress of our Profession. Deeply as all her faithful ministers and subjects must deplore the painful circumstance that veils the light of her bright countenance from any region of her boundless realm, and equally rejoice when freedom from oppressing causes gives her the power once more to assert her ancient undivided reign,

Our province is to heal, and not to judge.

If I have appeared to wander from my course, the digression will, I hope, be found, like a widely extended march through the enemy's country in a recent war, to have contributed much to the success of the undertaking.

If I have dived deep into the mysteries of our nature, it has been to discover the pearl which lies hidden, for weal or for woe, beneath the earthy incrustations of the mother shell.

If I have deliberately entered the wilderness

of free-will, and penetrated the tangled jungle of human actions, motives, and passions, it has been with the determination of bringing out a useful principle; and not

To find no end, in wandering mazes lost.

It has been my endeavour to trace—through the various aspects, the different forms, the changing conditions of disease—one principle of action to meet the wants of all: not by presumptuously attempting to institute new power, or infuse new life, but by diligent ministration to give relief to nature, to remove the offending cause, alleviate the susceptible condition, and guard against the predisposing circumstance, whether affecting soft parts, fibrous structure, bone; veins, arteries, or absorbents; nutrition, waste, or reproduction; brain, medulla, or sympathetic; motion, sensation, or volition; body, mind, or moral feeling; by educating the physical, mental, and moral faculties, cultivating the Eye of the Eagle, the Hand of the Ladye, the Heart of the Lion, the moral attributes of the Physician not less than the physical qualities of the Surgeon; thus

developing the triple cord of skill, judgment, and humanity, the active surgery to bind up the wounds, the discretion to pour in the wine, and the kindly feeling, the oil of comfort and hope: not following the example of one who came and looked on, and passed by on the other side,—proof in his professional robe against the oppositions of science, having learned the influence of mind over matter; having yet to learn the power of moral force over the strength of the intellect.

It is recorded of Washington, that in his last moments he spoke kindly to those around him, apologised for the trouble he gave them, and added, Well! it is a debt we all owe to one another; and, I hope, when you want aid of this kind, you will find it.

We are, one and all, corpuscles in the seething mass of humanity; so should each molecule perform the task assigned to him to the best of his ability,—whether in the eye, the ear, or the hand; the chest, abdomen, or pelvis,—not only as the performance of his own individual function, but as a responsible component part necessary for the support of the

strength, and preservation of the dignity of the living temple of man.

It has been said that the horrors of war, so far from engendering a spirit of cruelty towards one another in the bands of heroes which it creates, converts the sense of common danger into a strong tie of mutual support; and surely we, volunteers in a service the avowed object of which is the relief of human ills, can hardly so far forget our profession as to make our personal interest the mainspring of our individual success, to the neglect of our primary intention. Can we still cling to the narrow petty policy of *Every one for himself*, and blindly refuse to recognise the guiding principle which rises up to direct our course and appoint our daily task; that unseen influence which illuminates our path, and ever and anon conducts us to the vestibule of the supernatural,—not to leave us in darkness, but circumferenced about by the pillar and canopy of cloud which shields our feeble and imperfect vision from the full blaze and majesty of light. Can we consistently ignore the gift of healing which is continually coming down like the gently falling rain, to be full as

oft ungratefully received and unwillingly admitted by our objecting minds, as the distribution of that Invariable Providence which is *God for us all?*

If we determine to carry out the injunction of Marshall Hall, and cultivate an independent spirit of observation, we must be equally prepared with John Hunter to suffer for having the culpable audacity to act upon our own convictions: yet how else is it possible to deal with the mass of work which is constantly rising up before us, to go through the toil of practice, and keep pace with the literature of the day.

For many books,
 The wise man said, are wearisome: who reads
 Incessantly and to his reading brings not
 A spirit and judgment equal and superior,—
 And what he brings, what need he elsewhere seek,—
 Uncertain and unsettled still remains;
 Deep versed in books, and shallow in himself,
 Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys
 And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge,
 As children gathering pebbles on the shore.

The Prince of Philosophers thus simply and modestly replied, when his friends expressed their admiration of his vast discoveries: “To myself I seem to have been as a child playing on the sea-shore, while the immense ocean of truth lay unexplored

before me." And although no simile could more forcibly bring before the mind the immensity of creation, compared with the puny and limited power of man, or the great extent of Newton's labours, compared with those of other men the remark is justly applicable to him ; yet, in forming the estimate of John Hunter's professional character, and the influence which his labours had upon the improvement of Surgery, we must remember that we are not, as with ordinary minds, merely to enumerate the various practical amendments of which he was the immediate author. His merits were of a far higher order ; and inasmuch as he was the first who taught us to bring the light of physiology to bear upon the practice of our art—and by his writings, his teachings, and his example, stimulated the minds of numerous able followers to pursue the course which he originally marked out—he has just claims to be considered as the author of a new era in the history of our profession, as the result of his labours was not only to instruct and increase knowledge, but to point out the way in which human skill could be made most highly instrumental in doing good to

his fellow-creatures. It is no disparagement to the great astronomer, to say that the labours of the Physiological Surgeon, rivalling his own in their vast amount, were higher in their range, more extended in their scope, and not limited to the strand. Hunter embarked upon the Ocean of Truth itself,—encouraged not deterred—attracted rather than repelled by its unknown extent, by its unfathomable depth, and by the ever-receding horizon of inquiry. And if it be our boast that we live in an age of progress, we, especially as members of this Society, have no alternative but to emulate with humble confidence his spirit of diligent industry, and to follow his course on the same illimitable, but no longer trackless, ocean: ever remembering that not according to the extent of anatomical accomplishment, physiological investigation, pathological research, the minuteness of microscopical observation, the accuracy of chemical analysis, or botanic classification,—not according to our proficiency or extent of refinement in any other mode of scientific inquiry will our advance be estimated; but according as these several sources of knowledge and means of

inquiry into Nature's laws are brought to bear upon the main object of our profession, and increase our capability of administering to the relief of human suffering in the healing of the sick; in a word, not according to our knowledge, but in proportion to its practical application to our work.

Oh! what a glory doth this world put on,
 For him who with a fervent heart goes forth
 Under the bright and glorious sky, to run
 His course thro' rugged paths and toilsome ways,
 And in the autumn of his life look back,
 On duties well performed and days well spent.
 For him the wind, aye, and the yellow leaves,
 Shall have a voice and give his teachings eloquence.
 He shall so hear the solemn hymn that death,
 Hath lifted up for all, that he shall go
 To his long resting place without a tear.

THE END.

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